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TESTIMONY ON THE KYOTO CLIMATE CHANGE TREATY
BY
REPRESENTATIVE JOE KNOLLENBERG
BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL ECONOMIC GROWTH,
NATURAL RESOURCES, AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate having the opportunity to testify today about the UN treaty on climate change that was recently negotiated in Kyoto, Japan.

As a member of the congressional delegation that monitored the negotiations of this treaty last December, I was outraged by the final agreement.

This treaty is a terrible deal for the United States: As members of Congress, we have an obligation to ensure that its provisions are not implemented.

The Kyoto treaty requires the United States to reduce its emissions of greenhouse gases by 7% below 1990 levels by the years 2008-2012. To meet this stringent requirement, the United States would have to dramatically reduce its use of energy.

What does this mean to the average American? Simply put, if the Kyoto treaty is ratified by the U.S. Senate, the American people will see their standard of living decline.

The Wharton Econometric Forecasting Associates (WEFA); a well-respected economic firm, has estimated that the Kyoto treaty would result in Americans paying almost 50 cents more for a gallon of gasoline and 600 dollars more a year for household utilities. WEFA also estimates that this treaty could result in the United States losing over a million jobs a year over a 15-year period.

Mr. Chairman, the drastic impact the Kyoto treaty would have on the U.S. economy is reason enough to oppose this misguided treaty, but there are several other reasons.

Allow me to offer two of them:

First, the Kyoto treaty is unfair. This treaty exempts 132 of the world's 166 nations from making any reductions in their emissions of greenhouse gases. This is problematic because nations like China, India, Mexico, and Brazil, which are exempted from the treaty are projected to be the largest emitters of greenhouse gases in the next century.

Therefore, even if global warming was a problem that could be addressed by reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases, this treaty wouldn't get the job done.

Second, the scientific community is divided on the issue of whether or not the emissions of greenhouse gases are causing the earth's temperature to warm. Global warming is only a theory. It is not a fact.

Mr. Chairman, given the lack of sound science on this issue, I believe it would be foolish to inflict the severe economic pain this treaty would cause on the American people.

Fortunately, there is strong opposition to this treaty in the Senate. That said, I believe it's important to continue monitoring this issue. I am concerned that the Clinton Administration, lacking the votes to win ratification in the Senate, will attempt to accomplish the goals of the Kyoto treaty through regulatory fiat.

Congress must ensure that this doesn't happen. We have an obligation to protect the integrity of the legislative process and to defend the economic interests of our nation against the over-reaching UN treaty on climate change.

Mr. Chairman, thank you once again for allowing me to testify today. I look forward to working with you and the other members of the committee on this very important issue.